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ABSTRACT

Discussed are: (1) historical and cultural backgrounds of the Japanese style of child rearing; (2) differences of child rearing style between Japan and the United States; (3) the hidden curriculum at school and home. Content explores the recent controversy in Japan over "Amae," or the Japanese infant's craving for close contact with its mother and the importance of the mother's provision of physical contact. It is suggested that American mothers spend less time with their children than Japanese mothers and more time in talking to the children. Five cultural differences in child rearing are discussed, including sleeping arrangements, clothing of infants, mother's responsibility for changing the child's diaper before it complains, placing babies in different positions, encouragement of language, and mother's role in promoting young children's academic achievement. Japanese teachers play the role of mothers at school and provide a class atmosphere of equality and cooperation. The mother-child relationship is the model of Japanese social relations, extending to the relations of a company's president and his staff. Currently, the Japanese mother's consciousness of child rearing has been changed due to improvement in the position of Japanese women. Their child-rearing attitudes tend to be Americanized, as the society changes in the direction of increased rationality, activity, and expressivity. (RH)

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CHILD-REARING AND DEVELOPMENT:

COMPARISONS BETWEEN JAPANESE AND AMERICANS

BASED UPON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL-ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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1. Historical and Cultural Backgrounds of Child-Rearing Style

How differences in child-rearing effect the development of children's characters? Before solving this question, it should be taken into consideration that some cultural differences may affect education. "It is generally believed that people with a common cultural background will share, to a certain extent, common values and behavioral priorities which may influence the resulting pattern of motivation and intellectual abilities."[1] Here, a Japanese-American comparison is useful to prove the researching each characteristics, because "parallel changes in other societies will provide fertile ground for further comparison, collaboration and theory building."[2]

Relatively, the Japanese who are strongly dependent like being in a group, what is called, "Amae no Bunka" in Japanese.[3] Recently, there was a controversy on "Amae" between Doi and Taketomo.[4] Dr. Takeo Doi originally proposed the key concept "Amae" to understand the uniqueness the Japanese personality structure based upon the long-term experiences as a psychiatrist(1971). His definition on "Amae" are as follows[5]:

> "Amae", in other words, is used to indicate the seeking after the mother that comes when the infant's mind has developed to a certain degree and it has realized that its mother exists independently of itself. In other words, until it starts to "Amaeru" the infant's mental life is an extension, as it were, of its life in the womb, and the mother and child are still unseparated. However, as its mind develops it gradually realizes that itself and its mother are independent existences, and comes to feel the mother as something indispensable to itself; it is the craving for close contact thus

developed that constitutes, one might say, "Amae".

The Japanese language "Amae" is the very unique and different one which we can't find in other foreign language, especially in English. He emphasizes the structure of the mind of the Japanese as a context of "Amae", above all, to comprehend the subtleness of the national characteristics to throw the light on the core of Japanese culture. The title of English edition of his book "Amae no Kozo" is "Anatomy of Dependence", however, Dr. Doi has not satisfied to translate "Amae" to "Dependence".

For Japanese mothers don't force mental independence on their children, spending much time with their children and keeping physical contacts rather than conversation. In this way, child's dependence satisfied with being mother's side becomes more and more stronger.[6] On the other hand, it seems, in American culture, individual, independence and assertion are very important. The reason is the following: because American mothers spend less time with children, they try to talk to children and encourage children's physical activities to communicate each other.[7]

The above-mentioned differences in mother's idea to child-rearing have relevance to each historical backgrounds. Before the Second World War, Japanese women who were low in position served their husbands and parents-in-law in the extended families without interruption all the day long. It is no exaggeration to say that wives were only tools to have and rear babies. So mothers wished to be with babies who were the very hope and pleasure for them. This mother's devotion to

baby is the main factors of confidence in a body and dependence. All human relationship from birth to death, for example, in the peer group, school, family and so forth, follow such mother-child relationship.[8]

American history is expressed by, in a word, "Frontier Spirit"; all Americans were pioneers who had to live by themselves in the wild nature. This character is understood easily, when we see the fact it is frequent for the Americans to change their occupations and addresses. That is, we see the horizontal social mobility. As the result, in America, fearing that overprotection make children weak, mothers discipline their children strictly, in order to be more strong and independent.[9] Moreover, unlike "within a society which is relatively monolistic, such as Japan, within a society which is decidedly pluralistic, such as the United States,"[10] communication by language is needed. That is why, children are trained to be able to express themselves well from early childhood.

2. Differences of Child Rearing Style between Japan and U.S.

Thus, cultural continuity from generation to generation is based on how mother-child relationship used to be in childhood. Then let's see five interesting differences in pre-school children's care between Japan and U.S. which form children's later personality.

Firstly, in Japan, there is an expression, "Kawa no Ji

ni Neru," which means baby sleeps between mother and father at night. Whenever baby crys, mother takes care of him.[11] In contrast, American babies sleep in other room, apart from parents, where even if they cry, no one comes to care. Instead, they sleep with "security blankets" which play as a part of mothers in giving babies a sense of stability.[12] These two situations must influence to form each children's independence and self-trust. Therefore, the Japanese is later to become independent from parents compared with the Americans.

Secondly, in addition to being always together with their mothers, Japanese babies tend to be bound by diapers and clothes. This influences to both mental and physical aspects. One point is that not only diapers take physical freedom away from babies but also introversive Japanese repress their various impulses, because baby's energy is given out not outward but inward the body, when physical activity is not free.[13]

The other point is as follows; according to tradition of Japanese cleanliness, the Japanese mothers are taught to pay attention to whether baby's diaper is wet or not, and if it is wet, she must exchange it as soon as possible, or babies become to be insensitive to the sense of uncomfort. So Japanese mothers do this process, before babies cry to complain of uncomfort, in which there is no communication. After all, mothers are so considerate that babies don't have to express themselves. It is the reason the Japanese are called so moderate and so controllable. By the way, the

Americans who are brought up in free environment are quite opposite to the Japanese, at the point that are more active physically and more extroversive mentally than the Japanese.[14]

Thirdly, as you know, Japanese babies who put on diapers and clothes are lied on their back, but American babies sleep face downward. The former is passive, the latter is active at the point that babies can move by themselves, using their bodies against the beds, when they breathe with difficulty. In fact, though this style may causesudden infant death, it is important for babies to suffer moderate pains.[15] Like this, while American mothers stimulate babies to ask for good conditions by themselves, Japanese mothers make babies calm and accept the present situations.[16] That is, because to change baby's position means to make mental freedom as well as positive activity of his hands and legs, there is a great difference in the formation of personality between the Japanese and the Americans.

Forthly, American mothers need babies to appeal themselves to others by language. If a child is in trouble, his/her mother denies his/her mistake, points out how it is wrong, or gives him/her hints for right solution. In this way, American children learn to talk well. For instance, when a child plays with building blocks, if he/she is doing something wrong, American mother gives her baby questions little by little, without giving direct answer, so that he/she can think and get the answer by himself/herself. But Japanese mothers show correct answer soon, in this case.[17]

Finally, in recent Japan where the social environment around children are very serious, especially about school work, children who hate to study "seem not to be good students". Mothers, what is called, "Kyoiku-mama" force children to study hard for "their bright future". On the other hand, in America, it is important for children to play with others and to have social contact, because they can get anything precious from playing. In short, it can be said that the Japanese have pessimism and the Americans have optimism.[18]

3. Hidden Curriculum at School and Home

How about school education? In Japan, teachers play the role of mothers at schools, and the atmosphere in the classes is all equal and all cooperative. It is quite different from American students who like to stand out and compete with. Scholars comment on each characteristics of Japanese and American students:

> They (Japanese scholars) consider a lack of individuality or creativity fostered in Japanese youth. In contrast, their American counterpart's are concerned with the lack of learning of basic skills now evident in primary and secondary education, as well as with the alarming disorganization and lack of discipline prevalent in many classrooms: Another concern, ... critical assessment by a student is praised in the United States, where in Japan it is discouraged. In the Japanese school system, assertiveness receives no positive evaluation and is not seen as a desirable outcome of effective education.[19]

Viewed from another angle, Japanese children whose independence is late because of long dependence with their

mothers the emotional development including human relationship is less mature. So they are not good at accommodating to other culture or strangers. Besides, the reason is in Japanese educational system; Because the Japanese think much of getting good marks at school, children must work so hard that they can't know anything interesting except their work for the school-subjects. There is even a word, "Kyoiku-mama" or "an education-minded mother" in Japan. In the United States, it is general that students have various extracurricular activities after school, for example, football, tennis, music lessons and so on. Through these club activities, they learn human relationship, leadership or culture.[20]

Next, how about after graduation from school? Traditionally, we have an idea "One nation is one family". Like this, one company is also like one family. The relations of the president and his staff are equivalent to that of mother and children. Japanese company's remarkable growth have been owed to this relationship making company stable and doing their best in cooperation from the president to staffs. Even if an individual is sacrificed, it is for the group profits. This is the Japanese virtue. But this seems to be unbelievable for the Americans. Because they think that an individual is the most important one, the company and staffs are only connected with business contracts.[21] Thinking like this, it is possible to say that child-rearing beginning with mother-child relationship influences one's personality through all one's life and moreover the nation's culture.

In these days, the Japanese mother's consciousness for child-rearing have been changed by the improvement in their position. The more they have occupations, the more they desire for their own identity. They became to think much of "Mammy's time", the time when mothers can do anything they like, forgetting about their children.[22] Also, the physical environments of child-rearing have been changed, from sleeping with mother (Kwa no Ji) to using the play-pen, and from the extended families with grandparents who tell the traditional manner of child-rearing to the nuclear families.[23]

Like this, the Japanese mother's attitude toward child-rearing tend to be americanized. If mother's child-rearing senses are changed, at the same time, this means the change of society and culture which consist of different educated members before the World War II. At last, the experts in this field expect the future in Japan: with this mother's revolution, in the near future, the Japanese society will be formed by only contract, people will be rationalistic and the Japanese culture will not be considerate but active and expressive.[24]

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